

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.114

Appln. No. 09/987,652

Docket No. Q67305

REMARKS

Claims 1-7 are all the claims pending in the application. Claims 1 and 4 are independent claims.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as allegedly not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one of ordinary skill in the relevant art that the inventors, at the time that the application was filed, had possession of the invention. Specifically, in the Advisory Action dated November 13, 2003, the Examiner indicated at page 2 that:

The Applicant's drawings show a "column" 4 but are silent to an "upper portion" of the column (as is the Applicant's written disclosure). Thus, the claim that the steering-signal transmitting unit, the turn signal lever, the wiper control switch, and the fitted recessed portion are all attached to the upper portion of the column is not clearly supported by the Applicant's drawings because the drawings show that all of the above attachments are attached not to the upper portion of the column, keeping in mind that the Applicant has defined column as element 4...

As such, the Examiner has interpreted the recited feature of a "column" not as including the entire automobile steering column, but merely as a unit of the steering column that includes, for example, a turn signal lever.

In view of the Examiner's position that the previously recited "upper portion" is not supported by the original specification, independent claim 1 has been amended to instead recite that "a steering-signal transmitting unit, a turn signal lever, and a wiper control switch lever are attached to the column to form a *lever unit*", and claim 4 has been amended to recite that "the

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column, the turn signal lever, and the steering-signal transmitting unit form *a lever unit*.” These amendments are fully supported by the original specification at least by the paragraph bridging pages 8 and 9 of the specification.

It is further noted with respect to claim 1, that at least Figs. 1 and 2 clearly show a non-limiting embodiment in which the turn signal lever 1 and wiper control switch lever 2 of the lever unit substantially adjacent, or next to, the fitting recessed portion 6.

As such, in view of the amendments and arguments discussed above, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, rejection of claims 1-7.

Prior Art Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by Hoshino et al. (US 4,683,375).

With respect to amended claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that Hoshino does not teach or suggest all of the claim recitations. For example, Hoshino does not teach or suggest the claimed structure for mounting a steering angle sensor having a lever unit formed by the steering-signal transmitting unit, the turn signal lever, the wiper control switch lever, and the column.

Instead, Hoshino merely discloses a *lower* column tube 20 having a disc 14 (signal-transmitting unit) that is separate from any structure that would include the turn signal lever or the wiper control switch lever. The use of the claimed invention having a *lever unit*, in which the various parts are formed together, in the claimed invention provides an efficiency over

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Hoshimo's device where the signal lever and the wiper control switch lever are far from the steering-signal transmitting unit.

As such, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claim 1, and that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claims 2-3 at least because of their dependency from claim 1.

In addition, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of independent claim 4 at least because Hoshino does not teach or suggest the claimed steering angle sensor in which the column, the turn signal lever, and the steering-signal transmitting unit form a lever unit, and that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claims 5-7 at least because of their dependency from claim 4.

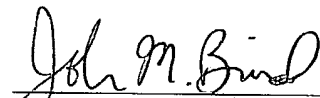
Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

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The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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